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SUBJECT: O GLOBO NEWSPAPER, "A Fresh Start" on U.S.-Russian Relations

Center-right O Globo commented on page 06 (03/31/2009): "The fact that Start 1, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, signed in 1991, will expire in December gives practical meaning to the first meeting between Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitri Medvedev, which will take place tomorrow in London. The apparent interest that they both have...to further reduce their nuclear arsenal could pave the way for the review of a shaken bilateral relationship.

...both countries need one another. The time when Russia could do without Western investors and rest solely on its oil and gas exports is long gone. These are times of crisis and the price of oil has tumbled, reducing the Kremlin's bargaining power and putting at stake the hegemony of the dominant political group-read Vladimir Putin and his entourage.

The United States needs Russian influence to obtain more flexibility from Iran when it comes to the Iranian nuclear program... Moscow can spur Iran to contribute to the stabilization of Iraq and Afghanistan, and also make them contributors to the peace process in Israel, Palestine and Syria.

President Obama has replaced the less than friendly approach of George W. Bush with an openness for a fresh start with the Kremlin, which still resents U.S. policy to attract former Soviet Republics like Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO... When these two young presidents meet, empathy might favor the discussion of burdensome topics. Advancing negotiations to reduce nuclear weapons... will be a promising new beginning.

MARTINEZ